

**REMARKS**

***I. Amendment to the Claims***

By this amendment, claims 1-11 have been cancelled. Thus, the rejection based on double patenting is rendered moot.

Upon entry of the foregoing amendment, 20 claims are pending in the application. Of the pending claims, 3 claims are independent.

***II. Amendment of Notice of References Cited***

Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner remove from the list of References Cited Applicant's own patent, US-6,682,144 (issued January 27, 2004). The present application claims priority to the application on which US-6,682,144 is based, U.S. Application No. 09/729,538, filed December 4, 2000. Since the present application claims priority to this now-issued patent, the patent should not be considered prior art for the present application. The applicant's issued patent may have been included in the list of References Cited inadvertently, as this patent was not included in the list of patents referenced by the Examiner on page 2 of the official communication of August 10, 2004, under the heading "Conclusion".

***III. Conclusion***

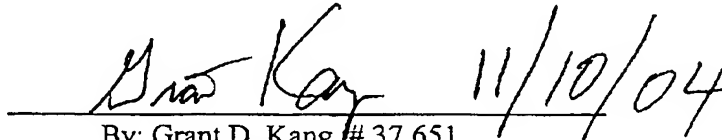
Applicant respectfully submits that the independent claims are allowable over the prior art of record, including the cited references. For similar reasons, and for the additional reasons set forth above, Applicant urge that the dependent claims are also allowable.

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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